

Senator Jane Nelson's Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE CALLS FOR TOUGHER
PRIVACY LAWS AS PART OF INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS**

AUSTIN -- Medical privacy laws ought to be strengthened and Texas should take a more active role in promoting the state's medical research industry, according to the interim recommendations released today by the Senate Health Services Committee.

The Committee, chaired by Senator Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound, spent the past year studying a list of important health issues at the request of Lieutenant Governor Rick Perry. The committee's charge was to:

- Inventory and analyze the amount and type of research related to pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and genetics currently occurring in Texas to maximize health benefits and explore ethical implications.
- Evaluate changes in Medicaid and review the program's effectiveness in managing chronic illnesses.
- Review state policies on medical privacy, including the availability of prescription data.
- Monitor the implementation of the Children's Health Insurance Program.
- Assess the Texas health care work force's readiness for health care needs in the new century and evaluate the availability of health care providers in rural and urban areas.
- Review policies on vaccinations for children.

"This committee worked diligently over the past year and looked at these issues from all sides. I am proud of our work, and it is my hope that this report will bring into sharper focus issues such as medical privacy; the plight of our state's medical research industry; the state of our health care work force and other pressing medical issues," Senator Nelson said. "We put everything from telemedicine to bioterrorism to child vaccinations under our microscope with the overall goal being to improve the health of all Texans."